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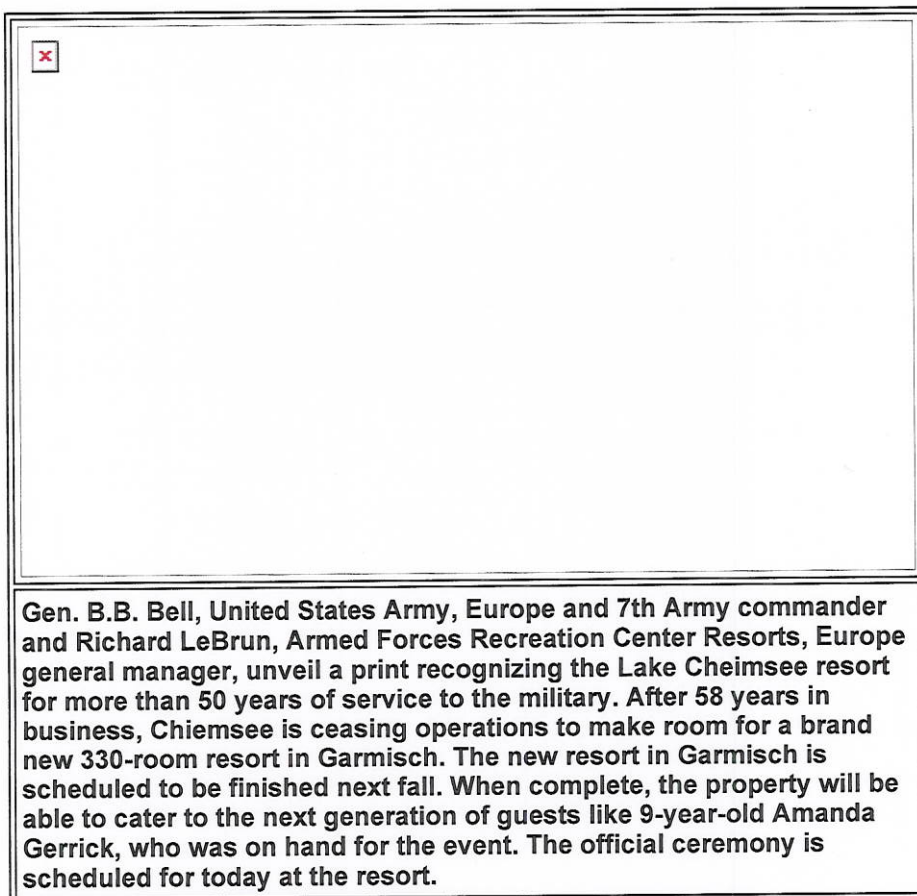
Chiemsee to shut doors after 58 years of supporting troops

Story and photos by Bob Purtiman, USAREUR Public Affairs

CHIEMSEE, Germany -- In its 58 years as part of the Armed Forces Recreation Center Resorts in Europe, more than one million service members, their families and civilians have utilized the Lake Chiemsee Resort.

The resort, located on Bavaria's largest lake, will shut its doors for good following a ceremony on Sept. 2.

Originally opened on Sept. 1, 1938, the hotel was used as a German hospital during World War II. In 1945, the AFRC commissioned the resort to provide rest and relaxation to service members in Europe after the war.



Gen. B.B. Bell, United States Army, Europe and 7th Army commander and Richard LeBrun, Armed Forces Recreation Center Resorts, Europe general manager, unveil a print recognizing the Lake Chiemsee resort for more than 50 years of service to the military. After 58 years in business, Chiemsee is ceasing operations to make room for a brand new 330-room resort in Garmisch. The new resort in Garmisch is scheduled to be finished next fall. When complete, the property will be able to cater to the next generation of guests like 9-year-old Amanda Gerrick, who was on hand for the event. The official ceremony is scheduled for today at the resort.

"The heritage of Chiemsee is something that the staff and United States Army Europe should be proud of," according to Richard LeBrun, AFRC Resorts in Europe general manager. "However, what we're going to provide our next generation of service members is a higher lever of service and force protection."

"What we're doing is right for our future generation of soldiers," he added.

Closing an AFRC property is nothing new to conference coordinator Kathy Steel. She helped close down Berchtesgaden in 1984 before moving on to Chiemsee.

"I've enjoyed the time I've spent up here," she said. "It took a long time to get used to and it'll take a long time to forget. I'll miss a lot of the people I've worked with ...we've had a real close family here"

Steel, who will move on to the new resort in Garmisch, said she will miss the sun rising over Lake Chiemsee.

Recreation director, Al Warren, echoed the same thoughts.

"I enjoyed the family atmosphere here," he said. "I'll miss the lake the most. We do have to move forward. Chiemsee is a great facility but we're moving to an even better facility."



Soldiers from Bad Aibling's, 108th Military Intelligence Group, flag detail recover the U.S. Flag as others hold the Bavarian and German flags at a ceremony officially closing the Chiemsee Armed Forces Recreation Centers resort on Lake Chiemsee. The ceremony marked the end of more than 58 years of serving U.S. soldiers and their families at the famous resort.

When the new resort opens sometime next fall, visitors will still get to see a reminder of Chiemsee. According to LeBrun, each of the properties in AFRC Europe will be represented one way or another at the new property.

One thing will remain constant—the service.

“It is our responsibility to ensure that the service guests enjoyed at AFRC Chiemsee continues to exist over the decades that we have a presence in Europe,” he added. “Our future generations of children and families will be able to rest and have an enjoyable family vacation. We’ll be able to do that in a safe, secure and excellent environment at the new property at Garmisch.”

U.S. Army Europe’s top soldier had high praises for both Chiemsee and the new facility in Garmisch.

“This place (Chiemsee) has served the United States of America magnificently for 58 years,” said Gen. B.B. Bell, United States Army, Europe and 7th Army commander. “It’s a testimony to the German and American partnership.

“We’re closing this place to make room for an unbelievable, world-class resort that will open next fall,” he added. “It’s a place that our current service members will love and our future generations of visitors will be able to enjoy.”

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